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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The relationship between a child's social environments and his development was studied. A main area of concern was cultural disadvantage among children from lower socio-economic backgrounds. These children not only fell behind in basic scholastic growth, but also responded minimally to the function of the school.

The basic philosophy of the Institute was that these negative conditions were correctible. While the practical aim was to save lost potential, knowledge was also gained about the development of cognition, learning, emotional maturity, and self-growth. Techniques used to combat negative attitudes of children included early enrichment to prevent improper learning and social disabilities, and remediation to help overcome disabilities that had already developed.

Other areas of research included the relationship of different environment to language, classroom communication between children of various socioeconomic strata, and the effects of various psycho-pharmacological agents on children's learning.

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DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

ED002481

THE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES

DESCRIPTIVE STATEMENT

1958-60

Department of Psychiatry
New York Medical College
Flower & Fifth Avenue Hospitals
5th Avenue & 105th Street
New York 29, New York

The Institute for Developmental Studies was established in 1958 as the Mental Health Research Center for Learning Disabilities of the Medical Center of the State University of New York. It assumed its present name when, in September of 1960, it became an interdisciplinary unit of the Department of Psychiatry of the New York Medical College.

One of the major aims of the Institute is the study of the relationship between a child's social environment and his development, and of the interaction between various social environments and various aspects of the psychological development of the child. Of major concern in this broad area is the effect of deprived backgrounds, such as those experienced by children in the lower socio-economic groups. An extremely large group of children from these culturally deprived backgrounds apparently fail to respond adaptively to the education offered in the schools. Not only do they fall behind in the basic scholastic skills, such as reading and arithmetic, but they also respond minimally to the broader aspect of the function of the school: the instilling of a respect for knowledge, the fostering of the development of the cognitive skills necessary for acquiring knowledge, and that general function of equipping a child to live in his own society as a responsible citizen.

It is far from a chance occurence that the low socio-economic status groups contribute the largest proportion of both retarded readers and delinquents to our population: both these groups are unable to respond appropriately to what the school offers, and apparently their deprived backgrounds contribute much to this inability. A basic philosophy of the behavioral scientists who compose the Institute is that these negative effects of deprived backgrounds are correctible. To that end, much of our research is related to examining the specific kinds of stimuli to which these children are not

exposed in their lives both before and after they enter school, and to delineating the specific developmental consequences of each type of deprivation.

While the practical work of the Institute is directed toward saving lost potential by finding means of correcting for deficiencies which impair the response of children from deprived backgrounds to all kinds of education, in the process of carrying out such work much is learned of the development of cognition, of learning, and of emotional maturing and self-growth as they take place in all children from all backgrounds. Thus the work of the Institute can be described as both "applied" in terms of education, community mental health, and social action research, and "experimental" in terms of exploration into the fundamentals of human psychological development and its coaction with the environment. In keeping with this dual commitment in a broad area, the research is guided by principles of maximum flexibility in both theoretical and methodological approach, within the strictures imposed by adherence to the scientific method.

Previous research, by members of the Institute and by many other behavioral scientists, has underlined the importance of the development of language and communication skills to the growth of cognitive and problem-solving abilities. Lack of verbal stimulation seems to be, too, a characteristic deprivation experienced by children from low-status-level backgrounds; conversely, such stimulation is experienced in great quantities by children from more favored backgrounds. The lower-class environment seems to be characterized by a lot of background noise and very little sustained verbal communication, while the middle-class environment seems to be almost the reverse. Thus when the lower-class child enters school, he is unprepared for the sustained speech on the part of the teacher to which he must attend

and respond for long periods and from which he is expected to learn. Thus two major focuses of our work are in the language and general verbal area and on problems of attentivity. We have already devised several tests and adapted several others to derive adequate pictures of the verbal abilities and patterns of both lower-and middle-class children, and to determine their understanding of and responsiveness to the speech patterns of their teachers. Teaching is by definition a middle-class occupation, and it is likely that, if speech patterns are indeed susceptible to class differences, the lower-class child has difficulty actually in understanding his teachers, in addition to having an apparently low responsivity to verbal communication. In keeping with our interest in problems of attentivity, we have devised several tests of attention which relate this function not only to the material being presented, but also to the stimulus modality of its presentation and to shifts from one modality to another. This is a hitherto largely neglected factor which may be of importance, as in the actual classroom situation, the child is continually called upon to shift his attention back and forth between visual and auditory stimuli.

The work of the Institute in these areas does not stop with explication of deficiencies and analysis of processes, however. An integral part of our program is devising and applying techniques of early enrichment in order to prevent the kinds of learning and social disabilities which develop in children from culturally deprived backgrounds, and techniques of remediation to help these children and their teachers to overcome disabilities which have already developed. To these ends, we have begun an experimental program of enrichment with a small group of kindergarten children, and have provided remedial reading services to a larger group of older children. The Institute will soon

have a more extensive remedial reading clinic which will concentrate on developing new approaches to the reading retardation problem, including use of the new teaching machines and similar instruments. Because of its inter-disciplinary staff, its location in a medical school, and the interest and excellent cooperation of the schools and the Board of Education, the Institute is in a unique position to unite its research program with a program of preventative and remedial service. By focusing on children from that area of the community which contributes most heavily to educational retardation and delinquency statistics, we hope that the Institute will fulfill a rescue role in an area of the city that is particularly deficient in mental health facilities for children. By concentrating on problems of school retardation (apart from those caused by basic mental retardation), we hope also to contribute to the prevention of emotional disorders, as such retardation is frequently causatively related to psychological disturbance as well as being sometimes symptomatic of it. In connection with this program, we are also attempting to find means for early identification of potential underachievers so that they can be helped before becoming actually retarded.

It is not possible in this brief statement to detail the work of the Institute on each aspect of the broad area it addresses. But it is pertinent to mention some of the major areas of research with which it has been concerned, and some of the larger specific projects which it has conducted or which are in process. These include: the relationship of differing environments to language development; classroom communication between teachers and children and between children of various socio-economic strata; the effects of various psychopharmacological agents on children's learning; investigation of relationships among sensory modality preference and efficiency, lateral dominance, and psychological development and functioning; and the development of experimental

educational techniques, verbal enrichment programs for the culturally deprived, and programs for training teachers to work with culturally deprived children. Also, the Institute is now establishing a laboratory for the study of the psychophysiological effects of brain damage and will soon begin a project on the retraining potential of brain-damaged children. These projects require the use of many techniques for studying verbal behavior, and the development of interviews, questionnaires, and tools to study perception and cognition.

The Institute, with its newly furnished and ample quarters at the New York Medical College, anticipates steady growth in the future. We expect that we will see annually between 400 and 600 children on an intensive remedial and research basis at the Institute, and that approximately another 600 children will be seen on a similar, though somewhat less intense, basis in the schools. Altogether thousands of children are available for the intensive study and analysis which will implement our aims of determining the nature of the interaction between social conditions and psychological development and of determining methods by which the vicious cycle of cultural deprivation, educational retardation, and then cultural deprivation of the next generation can be broken.

It is likely that society has never before really reached the children who form the bulk of the group that will pass through the Institute. Because these children do not respond to what the school--a major socializing institution-- at present offers them, society, when it has tried to reach them otherwise, has done so necessarily at too late a stage. We hope, thus, to offer means of understanding and preventing the alienation of these children from the school, with the loss of individual potential, the social delinquency, and individual behavioral maladjustments which accrue.

While one group cannot hope to explicate all the processes and remedy all the ills described here, we are certain that the Institute for Developmental Studies

SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR THE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES

In addition to being part of the Department of Psychiatry of New York Medical College, the Institute has received support from various agencies, including the following:

New York State Mental Health Authority

National Institute of Mental Health of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Taconic Foundation

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Cooperative Education Program of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Association for the Aid of Crippled Children

PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES

Alfred M. Freedman, M.D. Chairman and Professor, Department of Psychiatry

Martin Deutsch, Ph.D. Co-Director, Institute for Developmental Studies,
Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry

Senior Staff*

Cynthia P. Deutsch, Ph.D. Associate Research Professor of Psychiatry,
Senior Project Coordinator, 1960 --

Shirley Feldmann, Ph.D. Research Associate, Coordinator, Remedial Program,
1960 --

Marvin Hunter, Ph.D. Senior Research Associate, 1959 --
Senior Project Coordinator, 1960 --

Vera P. John, Ph.D. Senior Research Associate, 1959 --

Irving A. Taylor, Ph.D. Senior Research Associate, Senior Project
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Martin Whiteman, Ph.D. Associate Research Professor, 1961 --

Richard E. Wimer, Ph.D. Senior Research Associate, 1960 --

Consultants

Harry Beilin, Ph.D., 1959 --

Richard Brotman, Ph.D., 1961 --

Martin Hamburger, Ph.D., 1959 --

Ann McKillop, Ph.D., 1959 --

Jay Rosenblatt, Ph.D., (1959-1960.)

Suzan Salzinger, M.A., Associate Consultant, (1959-1960.)

Samuel Sutton, Ph.D., 1959 --

Martin Whiteman, Ph.D., (1959-1961.)

*Names within staff categories are listed in alphabetical order.

Social Workers

Edith Calhoun, M.A., 1960 --

Frances Weiss, M.A., (1959-1960.)

Junior Research Associates

Benjamin M. Braginsky, M.A., 1959 --

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Barbara Lewis, M.A., 1960 --

Daisy Low, M.A., (1960.)

Shirley Raab, M.A., (1958-1960.)

Herbert Robbins, M.A., 1959 --

Remedial Reading Tutors

Virginia Graff, M.A., 1959 --

Ida Mae Mahler, M.A., 1960 --

Dawn Matsuoka, B.A., (1960.)

Research Assistants

Dorothea Braginsky, M.A., Senior Research Assistant, 1960 --

Judith Eckman, B.A., (1959-1960.)

Nancy Freydberg, B.A., 1960 --

Sharon D. London, B.A., 1959 --

Iris Lubitz, B.A., (1960.)

Dargan E. Montgomery, Jr., M.A., 1960 --

Wilma Stevens, M.A., Senior Research Assistant, 1960 --

Edna Suchar, B.A., 1960 --

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Undergraduate Assistants

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Rheba Horn, (1960.)

Jean Lipschar, 1960 --

Ann Solomon, B.A., (1960.)

Stuart Taylor, 1960 --

Secretarial Staff

Claire A. Gersten, B.A., (1958-1960.)

Dorothy Goldberg, M.A., Executive Secretary, 1960 --

Marsha Goldenberg, 1960 --

Rita Yulsman, (1959-1960.)

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS OF THE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES AND ITS PERSONNEL DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REPORT.

1959:

Review of enrichment programs. Hunter, Marvin (Manuscript)

Educational Opportunities for Children from Low-socio-economic and Minority Groups in New York City Public Schools. Weiss, Frances (Manuscript)

A Day School for Schizophrenic Children - Methods in organization and Management. Fenechel, C;Freedman, A.M.; and Klopper. Z. Presented at annual meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association: New York City, March 1959. Am.J. Orthopsychiat., January, 1960.

1960:

The Prediction and Enrichment of Scholastic Performance of an Academically Retarded Population. Beilin, Harry (Manuscript)

Progress Report on the Development of a Concept Formation Test. Braginsky, Ben (Manuscript)

Preliminary Report on Effects of Atarax on Remedial Reading Performance. Deutsch, Cynthia P. (Progress Report, N.I.M.H.)

Effects of Hydroxyzine Hydrochloride on the Reaction Time Performance of Schizophrenic Children. Freedman, Alfred M., Deutsch, Martin, and Deutsch, Cynthia P. A.M.A. Arch. Gen. Psychiat., 3, 153-159.

Bio-Social Approaches to Research on Childhood Accidents, Freedman, A.M.; Presented at the Conference on Behavioral Approaches to Research on Childhood Accidents, West Point, N.Y., October, 1960; Sponsored by the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children.

Socio-developmental Considerations in Children's Accidents. Deutsch, Martin; Presented at the Conference on Behavioral Approaches to Research on Childhood Accidents, West Point, N.Y. October, 1960; Sponsored by the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children.

Report on Research in Remedial Reading. Graff, Virginia and Robbins, Herbert (Manuscript)

Minority Group and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement. Deutsch, Martin; Ithaca, N.Y.: The Society for Applied Anthropology, J. of Human Organization, Monograph Number 2, 1960.

Perceptual Shifting and Set in Normal School Children of Different Reading Achievement Levels. Raab, Shirley, Deutsch, Martin, and Freedman, A. M. Percept, and Motor Skills. 10, 187-192

Mental Health Services for Children in Brooklyn. Weiss, Francis (Manuscript)

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Mental Health Aspects of Educational Disabilities, July 1959-June 1960. Staff

Verbal Enrichment and School Achievement in Lower Socio-economic Groups. Staff (Interim progress report on verbal survey covering the period of October 1, 1959 to June 30, 1960.)

The Role of Language in the Cognitive Processes of Middle and Lower Class Children. John, Vera and Deutsch, Martin (Report delivered at AAAS meetings in New York City, 1960)

Courage as a Concept in Social Psychology. Deutsch, Martin, J. Soc. Psychol. (In Press)

Discussion and Critique of Some Variables in the Social Psychology of School-to-College Transition. Deutsch, Martin, J.Educ. Sociol., Feb., 1960.

Some Speculations on an Anti-social Episode: 1960. Deutsch, Martin, Introduction to Caplovitz and Rogers' Monograph on 1960 Anti-Semitic Episode. (In press)

Index and Short Description of All Tests. Staff.

Statistics Manual. Wimer, Richard